

## Are You Trained To Be A Homeschool Mama?

Gena Suarez

Considering homeschooling? Get ready for a wild ride!

I remember attending public school as a kid. Honestly, I was bored silly. Everyone had to do the same things. Everyone ate lunch at the same time, hungry or not. Everyone flopped down on their mats, closed their eyes tightly and tried to nap, sleepy or not. Everyone dabbed white glue on their popcorn and stuck it to their "sheep art thing" we all did. Everyone learned from the same lesson plans. Everyone was presented with the same material, and subsequently, everyone asked the same basic questions. Then, year after year, everyone moved on to the next "level."

When I would arrive home at night, I pretty much kept to myself. I was loaded up with enough homework to keep me occupied for hours, and my parents and siblings were not high on my "to do" list. They were not my top priority; school had to be. Plenty of times I was so exhausted at the end of the day-yet not finished with all of my assignments-I would let myself just doze 'til 4 or 5 A.M., and then drag myself out of bed to finish everything before trotting off to school to repeat the cycle. I felt like a sheep. Baaa-aaaah; better hurry, the bell's about to ring . . . again.

That is not the school life I want to give my own children. I don't want to have them gone all day only for them to come home and keep their distance from us. Why have kids? So we decided to homeschool. Then they turned five. Now what? I was not trained to be a homeschool mama. Who is? But hey, it's fun. I like having my kids with me, and they are learning! However, I must say, it's all the questions that drive me batty.

A question here, a comment there-this is fine; don't get me wrong. But imagine the never-ending question. The answer that just won't satisfy. The conversation that has no finale. One of my sons in particular has questions for me that he fires from a vocal cannon which once loaded can discharge for hours. When they begin to flow, my eyeballs start twitching. My hands sweat and my hair rises. Hide me. This boy (we have three) has asked us the oddest things (and I paraphrase, below) since the day he could talk. He somehow learned to chatter early, and quite well-definitely before I was ready.

Once, he spotted a spider in the upper left corner of our hallway and set out to explain to any soul who would listen, in his 2-year-old voice (and logic), that the spider was crying. How he came to that conclusion, I'll never know. The spider wasn't making a sound! Every time he saw any little eight-legger from that point on, he jumped up and down and exclaimed, "Pider cwying. Pider cwyyying!" Our homeschooling adventure with him had begun!

I should have known that the wacky questions from my little fireball of energy would

follow. Many of you, with your own kiddos, can relate, I'm sure. My son has an imagination that will not stop:

Age 2:

"Mommy, do chickens eat cookies?"

"Ummm . . . no. I don't believe they do."

"Why not?"

"Well, they were not made to eat cookies. The opportunity doesn't often present itself, I guess."

"Yes, but do chickens have lips?"

"Oh, for heaven's sake. No, they have a beak. Hey, look, we're almost at the park. Do you have your water bottle?"

"I want to be a racecar when I grow up. Can I?"

"You can drive a racecar, perhaps, but no, really you can't become one. You are a human being."

"But I want to be a racecar."

"Son, you're 2 years old. Give your career goals some TIME. Oh, look! There's the park."

Conversations with a 9-year-old can be just as offbeat. Like the time this same funny boy came to me extremely concerned that our dog, Liesel, possibly thought that he was just a fellow canine:

He said, "But Mom, how do you know that she knows I'm a person? Maybe she thinks I am another dog. I don't want her to think I'm like the other dogs around here. I'm really human. Do you think she knows?"

"Yes, Son, she knows."

"But how do you know that she knows? She can't see herself, so she may not know what she is, or what I am."

"Trust me. She knows that she's a dog and you are a boy. A human boy."

"But how do you know that?"

"I just do. She is quite aware that you are NOT a dog like her."

"How can you be sure?"

"Go clean your room."

Years later . . .

"Can my hen climb down a tree?"

"No, that would be impossible."

"I put her up there and she's cackling."

"What on earth . . . how high?"

"Really high."

"Which tree?"

"You know . . . that pine tree out front. And the rooster is at the bottom, all nervous."  
"Well, I'd be, too, if my spouse were trapped in a tree! Go get her down!"

Now that he is older, the questions aren't so unbaked. Instead, they're really intense. Lately I hear myself saying, "Go ask Dad. That's a 'dad' question." I don't remember being this inquisitive in school. Nor do I recall my friends with imaginations like his. And it's not just my family. This "ever-curiosity" seems to be somewhat the norm in homeschool families. The kids are hanging out with their parents, so they ask grown-up questions earlier. They are afforded individual attention, so their time is better spent learning. They get enough sleep, avoid threats from bullies (usually, anyway), and can relax. They have the freedom to learn without worry of peers, worry of teachers, and worry of what's to come.

A homeschool house does not have a "sheep mentality." It's a living, breathing "think tank" that will challenge you in more ways than you can imagine. And across the board, homeschooled students carry on very well; you know this. And while I was not trained to be a homeschool mama, my kids are being trained to be homeschool mama's and papa's. They'll do it even better than we are!

Keep up the good work and when you are at times tempted to rip out your hair, or if you are afraid of the upcoming "school years," remember that your little talker will someday be a brainy adult ... an independent thinker who will make a positive societal impact. To be sure, you are giving him an opportunity that is unmatched.

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### Biographical Information

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*Gena Suarez and her husband Paul are the owners/publishers of The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine, LLC. Gena enjoys strong coffee, good books and spending long periods of time in the van with her family. Paul and Gena have five children, ages one and a half to 19, and they hope to have a few more if the Lord allows. Come find her at Facebook, or become a "fan" of TOS Magazine's Facebook page.*

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